

# THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

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HON. EDITOR: W. B. STEVENSON

Hornsey Public Libraries

## Divisional Notes and News

### SPRING GROVE POLYTECHNIC

SCHOOL OF LIBRARIANSHIP, WINTER SESSION, 1945-46

#### *Preliminary Notice*

THE Winter Session will commence during the third week in September next. The Entrance and Registration Examinations will be covered, each Course consisting of 26 lessons (approximately), and the days and times will be as follows :—

Entrance	.. .. .	Wednesdays, 2-6 p.m.
Registration—		
Group (a)	1. Classification .. .. .	Fridays, 2.30-3.30 p.m.
	2. Cataloguing .. .. .	Fridays, 3.30-4.30 p.m.
Group (c)	6. History of English Literature ..	Wednesdays, 4-6 p.m.

Will those who are interested in the other sections of the Registration Examination please communicate with Harold Groom, F.L.A. (Responsible Teacher), Public Library, Treaty Road, Hounslow (Tel. HOU 2381) as soon as possible in order that the necessary arrangements may be made.

### WEST MIDLANDS MEETING

A joint meeting of the Birmingham and District Branch of the Library Association and the Midland Division of the A.A.L. Section, was held on Wednesday, 16th May, 1945. On that day, about seventy members met at the Public Library in the afternoon and, dividing into two parties, paid visits to two interesting local factories, Messrs. J. A. Crabtree & Co. Ltd., electrical fittings manufacturers, and Messrs. H. W. Lindop & Sons, Ltd., ironfounders. Proceeding afterwards to the Council House, they were entertained to tea by the Mayor (Councillor J. Whiston), who welcomed them to Walsall in very cordial terms, and spoke of the important part libraries would have to play after the war in satisfying the thirst for knowledge of returning Service men and women. Thanks to the Mayor for his welcome and hospitality were expressed by Mr. H. M. Cashmore, F.L.A. (City Librarian, Birmingham), Chairman of the Joint Committee of the two bodies, who also asked members to stand in silent tribute to a recently deceased member, Mr. H. A. Lacon, J.P., former Chairman of the Oldbury Public Library Committee.

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The Chairman then paid tribute to the great services rendered to Midland and National librarianship by Mr. Herbert Woodbine, who recently retired from the post of Chief Assistant in the Birmingham Public Libraries, and, after several members had also spoken in warm terms of Mr. Woodbine's great ability and ever-ready helpfulness, the Chairman presented him with a cheque representing the contributions of members outside the Birmingham Public Libraries who wished to give tangible expression to their good wishes. The Chairman explained that the staff of the Birmingham Public Libraries had already made a separate presentation to Mr. Woodbine.

Mr. W. Cooper, M.A., B.Sc. (Principal of Walsall Technical College), then addressed the meeting on "Some aspects of education, past, present and future." His paper was both wide in scope and interesting in detail, and the discussion which it evoked was the best possible tribute to its excellence. The meeting ended with the passing of warm votes of thanks to Mr. Cooper for his paper, and the Walsall Public Libraries Committee and their Librarian, Mr. F. S. Price, for their valuable co-operation in arranging the meeting.

### WESSEX DIVISION

The Winchester meeting which had been arranged for 9th May was a casualty of the peace, and the postponement until 6th June resulted in a rather smaller attendance than would have been present in May. However, quite a good gathering of members heard Mr. John Hadfield speak on "The National Book League and the Librarian," and the discussion which followed Mr. Hadfield's address gave an indication of the members' interest in the work of the National Book League. Perhaps when conditions and staffs are more normal it may be possible for the Division to do something about setting up local branches of the League. Mr. Hadfield will be glad to give any advice and help that he can towards this. We are grateful to the Winchester Corporation for granting us the free use of the Sessions Hall in the Guildhall for this meeting; and our thanks are also extended to The Right Worshipful Mayor of Winchester (Alderman Lieut.-General F. H. Griffiths, D.L.) for his welcome to the City and his presence in the Chair at the meeting; and to Mr. F. W. C. Pepper, City Librarian of Winchester, for his help in making the arrangements.

Meeting at the Central Library, Bournemouth, Wednesday, 26th September, at 3 p.m. Inspection of Music Library, and gramophone recital; followed by address, "The invention of printing and the first printed books," by Mr. H. W. Belmore, University College Library, Southampton.

## Council Notes

The Council met on 2nd May, the President, Mr. J. T. Gillett, in the Chair. The Hon. Secretary reported that the Greater London Division would provide hospitality for the Jubilee Meeting on 4th July. The Hon. Membership Secretary reported 93 new members, 68 reinstatements, and 17 resignations. It was resolved that a special Committee consisting of the Hon. Officers plus the Membership Secretary should be formed to consider the whole question of Divisional Areas and report to the next Council. The Hon. Secretary reported that she had been invited to attend the special meeting of the Emergency Committee of the Library Association dealing with the new Education Syllabus.

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The main matter before the Education Committee had been the necessary re-organisation of the Costs Section upon the new Syllabus. The Education Secretary reported that the Chairman and herself had attended a Meeting of Courses Editors, which sent to the Library Association two requests :—

- (1) for the postponement of the Syllabus ; and
- (2) for more detailed information regarding certain suggestions.

The Education Committee, whilst supporting the request for postponement, decided to proceed with the preparation of Courses to cover the new Syllabus, and as a first step the Chairman and Secretary, in consultation with the Section Editors and Tutors, are to prepare approved schemes for the separate Sections of Registration Examination and parts of the Final. The Press and Publications Committee submitted a scheme for paying royalties on A.A.L. publications, and it was resolved that a 10 per cent. royalty should be paid to authors.

It was resolved that on the Agenda for the Jubilee Meeting there should be an omnibus resolution asking for approval of the actions of the Council during the wartime period.



## Stitch in Nine

J. F. W. Bryon

*" Non nobis solum "*

I AM taking this municipal motto, though doubtful Latin, as sub-title, not because it is that of my particular authority, but because it expresses for me the spirit in which reconstruction must be planned and executed. We are accustomed to mutual back-patting orgies in which we refer to our service in deprecating terms. "Handmaid of the Arts" is an example of that mock-modesty which, expressed by Englishmen, annoys Americans so much. It is time for us to realise that we are not self-contained units, and that libraries are responsible to and for libraries everywhere.

Planning should be relative to the nature of the community. *Qua va sans dire*. Yet it used to be accepted that a library, if of a small provincial town, should be self-contained, and if of a larger suburb, related to the needs of the larger entity, as if the former owed no allegiance outside itself, and was not dependent upon outside resources to any extent. "Non nobis solum" is more than a motto now. It is a basic slogan for reconstruction and redevelopment. We are indissolubly united, willy-nilly, and may no longer disregard our obligations not only to neighbouring authorities, but also to districts many counties away. Library problems are national and international. So must their solutions be. Only when direction and planning are in the hands of a single central authority can unity of service be attained. Independence has meant incoherence hitherto. Unity of the whole presupposes unity of the parts. If one member is sick, all are affected. We have in the backward area a case in point. The reputation of libraries suffers by reason of their shortcomings, bans and restrictions.

Unrelated members, functioning independently, create chaos. To take an extreme

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example—it is possible for a vital book to be published, and not a single copy find its way to the shelves of a public library in the whole of the country. Expensiveness, obscurity or greater popularity of its contemporaries may prevent its appearance in any selection list, while duplication wastes innumerable funds.

Essential to creative librarianship are unity of control over a maximum area, economy of planning, and co-operation, regional, national and international. Ignoring the possibilities latent in international co-operation, and its implications, let us consider those of national planning. Coherence would very soon obtain, if a Central Libraries Committee, formed of regional representatives and in frequent session to consider and operate the means to constructive librarianship, were formed. Libraries would gain enormously in value if facilities were uniform, rules and regulations universal, methods of issue, catalogues and classification identical; and in addition would be more comprehensible to the reader. Familiarity breeds content.

Planned nationally, libraries' service could be implemented in a variety of ways. Building planning and design, public relations, microfilm work, photostating and talking book development, would be covered more adequately if national. Cataloguing would be simplified and made more useful if a central bureau issued uniform cards for all books published. Book selection would be facilitated if a permanent Committee or department of the Library Association reported on all books *before* publication. The National Central Library should be better supported, and would be if we were alive to its possibilities. Regional co-operative book-selection, purchase, binding, classification, publicity and building programmes should be possible. A national recognition of separate professional and clerical grades would follow the organisation of librarianship as a vital association. Our relations with the B.B.C., booksellers and binders would improve if conducted corporately. Universal interavailability of tickets seems inevitable. Why not now?

Considering more closely some of the benefits that would accrue from the organisation of library service on a wider basis, it is possible to visualise a Britain divided up into new and larger areas for the purposes of library administration, which would bear small relation to the present anomalous and arbitrary divisions. These regional authorities would assimilate the funds and plan the services of the whole area, which would function best if centred in a convenient town. This would eliminate to a large extent the quaint and awkward position of towns in county areas, independent of, but contributing indirectly to, the larger service.

With larger funds it would be possible to organise a uniform and proportionate service, according to population and transport (London could benefit from some such system as this) in which details and whole were in harmony. Book selection, taking into account National Committee recommendations, would find few books unobtainable, and thus it would be feasible to cover fields which are too specialised for the small authority. At present there is dire need in the provinces for representative collections of Music, Medical, Legal, Art, foreign languages and American publications. Because expensive, obscure or frequently out of date they are hard to replace, and often escape the small nets of contemporary funds. Too big a haul would break the nets!

Hospital libraries are another instance for regional planning, maintenance and administration, for hospitals serve a wider area than that in which they are situated.

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They provide a strong case for Government subsidy, too, whereby book provision might be made correlative to treatment.

Reverting to planning on a national scale, I submit that there is strong evidence for the revision of the Copyright Acts. The British Museum deserves its benefits—and more. But are not the needs of the National Central Library and the Regional Bureaux as great? There are good reasons why equal facilities be granted these bodies, together with adequate Government grants toward maintenance, to ensure to all readers and students (not only those living in the London area) equal amenities and rights. United in this way, it should be possible for libraries to obtain in advance copies of non-fiction books in sheets to be bound in a special library binding, in time for central classification and cataloguing, and shelving on the day of publication. This is only possible in bulk.

Standard cards would make union catalogues a simple thing, and would allow for unlimited expansion and duplication according to developments in local service. Departmentalisation, with its corollary of unity of stock, books and periodicals, would demand individual catalogues as well as union in every library.

I am aware that there is a mental inertia, an obstructionism, extant which is strong enough in its blindness to possible advantages to overstress the difficulties of expense and organisation, and consequently to hinder or delay the growth which I believe inevitable. Especially in the "local focus" system will this conservatism be apparent. Though our present system of palliatives for sickly book funds defeats itself, we still ask for selections of reference books suited to the smallest branch fund, and neglect to seek the ways of making the largest stocks available to the largest number. The alternative to the local focus system and the abolition of present boundaries would be the organisation, by counties, of a co-operative library system under an elected body independent of either county or municipalities, but responsible to a Government Libraries Board and inspectorate.

Books are frequently neglected by the public and go out of print, though valuable or even indispensable. There should be a department of the Library Association in touch with publishers' representatives to review editions of essential works in all fields, and to plan the production of new editions of such as were necessary.

It would be the duty of another department to compile and maintain up-to-date bibliographies, renewed periodically (like Keesing's) and sold complete or in sections on a proportionate subscription basis. All libraries would automatically have a complete copy, and in the larger systems, many such.

As yet there is a lamentable lack of co-ordination throughout libraries. A prime necessity is a World Library Committee, representing national associations, to co-plan development in all spheres of librarianship. Library schools in different countries might have similar curricula and thus achieve a greater degree of interchangeability of assistants.

There have been local, individual attempts to approach the problems involved. Bibliographies and subject indices to periodicals are instances. But there is much pointless duplication of effort, and one still finds rival books on kindred subjects appearing almost contemporaneously. Biographies are the most obvious example of this, but our own professional literature can provide an equally flagrant example in two comple-

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mentary and therefore incomplete books on a very specialised aspect of library service a few years ago.

H. G. Wells, as long ago as 1914, in an essay entitled "A Philosopher's public library," envisaged the planned production of necessary books on a guaranteed financial basis. One wonders if this constructive criticism by an intelligent layman received the consideration it merits. Librarianship is, or should be, to every practiser of it, more than a livelihood. It should contain for him an appeal to conscience as well as intellect. And a warning against parochialism in this direction also might not be out of place. Our self-examination must be not only "Am I doing enough for book service in this community?" but also "Is enough being done to further service to all men, everywhere, and in that preparation can I take any part?"

The ingredients of librarianship—books, staff and buildings—are for the most part makeshift substitutes even in the most enlightened and highly endowed communities. And in the lesser local services we provide an ersatz librarianship—counterfeit which rings false against the standard of what might be. Taking books first, and by books I mean all communication between man recorded in print, I suggest that we don't take care to provide the best books possible. Nor do I refer to the minor professional errors of preference for the large and impressive "value for money" book, or large fiction percentages, important as these are when we consider our duty to society. I refer to the fact of our preoccupation with what is already in print and our disregard of and indifference toward the future. When a vital book appears (such as the *Cambridge bibliography of English literature*) we thank the publisher and editor very prettily. We ourselves have no credit in the matter, though we ought.

For no longer must we regard ourselves as custodians only. We are librarians, and on our efforts greatly depend the mental development of future generations. The days of passive librarianship will soon be over. Our service may now be creative, dynamic, organic. This being so, we are compelled to accept the duty of considering such suggestions as that of Mr. Wells mentioned above. More recently he proposed an international, up-to-date, expert, specialist "World Brain." We considered it, individually, speculated upon it, individually, approved or condemned it, individually. But mention of it in the professional press or meetings there was little. It was a challenge to librarianship, as much as to the formal educational institutions of the world, but we have ignored it. But all learning is our province, and there is no branch of its dissemination which does not have contact with librarianship somewhere.



## The County Scene

Mary Piggott

PROFESSIONAL education offers peculiar difficulties to be solved by county library staffs. A boy or girl entering the profession as a junior assistant in a county branch library begins with a handicap and works under difficulties in addition to the usual burden of spare-time study. His initial handicap lies in his surroundings. The small market town or one-industry township which is the usual location of a county branch library has offered practically nothing in the way of

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cultural background during his schooldays—no visits to plays, museums, concerts, lectures, that almost form part of the curriculum for school-children in the large towns. His school-leaving certificate makes no extravagant claims on his behalf, and he has yet to realise that a stricter standard will be required in a professional examination. He has, therefore, first to learn how to study, then to realise that the librarian has "taken the whole of learning to be his province," and somehow to make up his want of general knowledge without which he cannot hope to succeed in cataloguing, classification, or, indeed, in his daily work at the library.

The junior assistant in a county branch library belongs immediately to a small staff, which gives him the opportunity to become familiar with all the routine work and to acquire a sense of responsibility. The lack of formality on such a staff permits the juniors to take part in planning new departures and modifying old methods. Concomitant disadvantages are there, however. The centralised classification and cataloguing in most county library systems gives the branch library assistant no chance of practising these arts, and the branch library catalogue affords little in the way of exemplary cataloguing, being justifiably little more than an author index and a shelf list. In most branch libraries there is limited scope for reference work and a limited stock of reference books. The total stock at a branch library is relatively small, and the only subject extensively covered is the local industry.

Visits to headquarters can help the junior preparing for his first examination. He can see what an accessions register looks like, examine the master-catalogue, and find out how the requisitions are dealt with which he takes at the branch and forwards to headquarters, and how his branch library fits into the whole county library system.

For the assistant preparing for the next examination, a visit to headquarters is insufficient; an exchange of duties for a period of a few months with an assistant at headquarters or at any central library is essential before he can face cataloguing and classification papers with any confidence. This is not suggested as an alternative to a year's full-time study, but as a substitute until leave of absence for study becomes the accepted practice. Until that time arrives, an improvement must be made in the help available to students.

Correspondence courses have proved themselves invaluable, but oral teaching should also be within reach of students living outside the large towns, and for this I suggest extra-mural lectures organised by the library schools. Membership of such classes would not, of course, be restricted to county library staffs, but would be open to students from all libraries within easy travelling distance. The tutors would be full-time members of the school staff, appointed both for their knowledge of their subject and for their ability to teach it. The extra-mural lectures would be part of their official duties, so that their time-tables would allow for preparing the lectures and correcting the papers of the extra-mural students. They would travel two or three days a week to accessible centres where the local public library, municipal or county, could provide accommodation for the class and could also have available for handling by the students books mentioned in the lectures and not likely to be found on branch library shelves, such as Halkett and Laing or Brunet.

For instance, the Manchester School would provide a tutor to lecture one day a week in Preston, where his students would come from the Borough Library, the Lancashire County Library headquarters, and from county branch libraries within easy

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travelling distance of Preston. This would be a tutorial class, with a minimum of about twelve students, who would pay fees to the library school. If such a class were formed, a colleague has suggested that the co-operation of the local technical school might be sought and a class in English literature arranged for the same morning or afternoon, so that students could attend, say, three hours' lectures on one half-day each week and only one tutor from the library school be needed. I believe that a resolution urging the appointment of travelling tutors was at one time submitted to the Council of the Library Association by the North-Western Branch and turned down. The establishment of library schools from which the tutors could operate may modify the Council's view.

There seems at present small hope for the qualified branch librarians studying for the final examination. When are they to ripen their judgment with reading, informed conversation and visits to other libraries, when write their thesis or consult works during its preparation in the British Museum or other large library? The branch librarian's duties are not over when the library closes. He is bound to give his utmost support to any cultural activities which may take place in his town—W.E.A. classes, a local literary or musical society, which in a large town would find many eager promoters, but in a small town depend a great deal on the local librarian's efforts. If he is to have a mature judgment on anything his working hours must be cut down, and this can only be done by giving him a competent senior assistant, recognised as his deputy, to whom he can legitimately allot some of the more responsible work. Length of annual leave granted by local authorities appears to depend on the amount of salary awarded, a question to which all arguments return, but which is beyond the compass of this article.

The isolation of which all county branch librarians complain—in most small towns the librarian is a recently evolved species to be approached with caution when at large—can be mitigated by staff meetings, both official and informal, and informal meetings might usefully be arranged with the staffs of independent authorities within the county boundaries. A particularly interesting and successful inter-library meeting, held before the war, took the form of a week-end conference arranged for the staffs of four neighbouring county libraries. Papers on such topics as branch libraries and village centres were read and followed by discussions, a good deal of walking and talking was done and a round-table discussion ended what had been a stimulating and enjoyable week-end. The release of requisitioned hostels and improved transport facilities should make more such meetings possible in the near future.

These suggestions are, however, complementary and substitutional to the idea of a term of residence in a school of librarianship. Nothing can discipline the mind to learning as effectively as contact with keen minds and the general striving towards higher ideals of scholarship, and nothing can rid the mind of a parochial outlook more quickly than a display of the best examples of professional work in its different aspects and the opportunity to participate therein. These the proposed library schools offer, together with life in a young, lively and intelligent community, placed, in some cases, in a town with its own historic cultural traditions, and, not least of the benefits of college life, the opportunity to talk and the long vacations to read. A county library authority expects a high degree of responsibility and efficiency from its junior assistants, and it is fitting that the authority should show its recognition of the service given by making it possible for such assistants as are worthy to complete their professional education at a library school.



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# The Finest Children's Reading Room in Moscow<sup>1</sup>

### Elizaveta Kingisepp

**I**N May, 1942—on the eve of the second war year—a large reading room for children and juveniles was opened in the Lenin State Library, Moscow.

The reading room became a popular haunt for the young visitors in the very first days of its existence. In fact, for many children it became a second home: they come here daily and frequently twice a day.

The number of registered readers is growing very rapidly. In eight months of 1942 2,538 youngsters registered at the library; in 1943 8,875; and in five months of 1944 the figure already reached 7,365.

The attendance is increasing correspondingly: in eight months of 1942 there were 30,248 visitors, i.e., an average of 126 persons a day, and a circulation of 66,636 books; in 1943 118,876 visitors, an average of 350 persons a day, and a circulation of 243,619 books; and for the five months of 1944 80,887 visitors, an average of 540 persons a day and a circulation of 166,854 books.

The readers who come here are pupils of elementary and secondary schools from ages of 9 to 17, students of technical schools, preparatory courses and various institutions of higher learning, also pupils of trade schools and adolescents employed in production.

The readers in the younger group are mostly boys, the number of girls is growing while the number of boys and girls in the juvenile group is the same.

The reading room staff consists of twenty librarians, all of them women. More than 50 per cent. of them have a higher literary, historical and specialised education; some have been working in children's libraries for many years.

A librarian in a children's reading room is not a person who merely hands out books. She is really an educator. She directs the reading of the children and juveniles along definite lines. She is not only well versed in the library's book stock and in literature generally, but knows her readers, their tastes and requirements, and their personal characteristics. She speaks to the child and guides him to his choice of books, and draws up a plan of reading which will have direct bearing on the question or questions he wants answered.

A different approach is required for different ages. Special attention is accordingly concentrated on the younger readers—pupils of the first four forms in school—and also juveniles, students of the three higher forms in secondary schools and other readers of fifteen years and older.

In the main, these readers call for books on history, literature and material on the Great Patriotic War; they are interested in cities liberated from the German-Fascist invaders, and cities in other countries—London, New York, Paris, Venice. They read many classics and the latest Soviet and foreign literature. Of world-renowned authors they are fond of Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, Charles Dickens, Sir Walter Scott, Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac. They are especially attracted by the biographies of great generals.

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<sup>1</sup> Printed by courtesy of the Women's British Soviet Committee.

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In addition, they are keen on books on engineering, especially military and radio, and also on problems of natural science. *The young technician* is a favourite magazine with the youth.

Yablokov, a factory worker, read a whole set of the *American technique and industry* magazine. This helped him to familiarise himself with new American equipment.

The pupils of the 4th to 6th forms are attracted by adventure stories and historical novels. Their favourite foreign authors are : Jules Verne, Jack London, Alexandre Dumas, Walter Scott. They love books of humour like Jerome K. Jerome's *Three men in a boat*, tales by O. Henry, *The adventures of the brave soldier Schweik*, etc.

The very youngest readers are naturally fascinated by fairy tales. They love to read about the lives of children and stories about the war. Their favourite foreign literature is *Robinson Crusoe*, *The adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *The adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, by Mark Twain, *Uncle Tom's cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, and others.

The book repository consists of 30,000 volumes and magazines. Russian and world classics are well represented ; there are new books of Soviet and foreign belles-lettres, on history and the lives of great people ; many popular books in various fields of natural science and technique, the arts, sports, travel. There are books in foreign languages and in the languages of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

The library has an information-bibliographic department which recommends lists of books on various subjects and helps the reader to use the catalogues, manuals and encyclopædias.

Even the very youngest get accustomed to choosing their books independently. For the little ones there is an illustrated catalogue of fairy tales, illustrated albums of works by children's authors, etc.

For pupils of the third form and upwards there are suggestion lists and albums on the most diverse subjects, as for example : " Observe and study Nature," " Learn to do everything yourself," etc. These albums are extremely popular.

Separate book exhibitions arranged for older and younger children are of great importance. The exhibitions mark important dates, and are dedicated to writers and famous people in the sciences ; exhibitions also popularise new books and new phenomena.

When Moscow conducted a contest on the best compositions written by school-children on her cities—Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Sevastopol—the library arranged literature on all these cities. The material on display was utilised by 75 young people—ten of whom won prizes.

The State Children's Publishing House and the editorial staffs of children's magazines give readings of original manuscripts in the reading room. Writers come here and read excerpts from their new works. The young listeners become very animated and often their opinions, aptly expressed, hit the mark. Authors who have visited here lately are Samuel Marshak, Leonid Sobolev, Lev Kassil, Agnia Barto and others.

The library also arranges meetings with heroes of the Soviet Union. Not long ago Belorussian partisans came and recounted to the children how they fought the Fascist invaders.

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The best-known scientists in the land deliver lectures. For example, Academician Keller gave a talk on Soviet science in war-time; Professor Bakhrushin on old Moscow.

Literary evenings are organised at which discussions take place on technical literature for youths.

The children and juveniles love their reading room, and respect the library staff. Shirokov, one of the first to visit the reading room, recalls with satisfaction that in a year and a half he independently covered the subjects of three higher forms of secondary school here, and took his examinations as an extra-mural student. Now he is studying at a university and has become a constant visitor to the reading room for adults.

## The Library of Hawaii

S. J. Butcher

BEFORE I had the opportunity of visiting the territory of Hawaii, these islands brought to mind pictures of tall palms, rice fields and hula dancers, with no particular interest to the librarian from a professional viewpoint. One cannot, however, spend very much time in Honolulu without hearing of the Library of Hawaii. Situated near the City Hall, it is the centre of the cultural life of the islands and has recently become the "home from home" of Service men stationed there. To the student of librarianship the library is an example of how successful a policy of freedom from restriction and individual service can be.

The library serves a population of 452,000. In addition the U.S. Fleet, the Army units stationed in the islands, and the thousands of defence workers increase the demands on the service. Approximately 300,000 people live on the island of Oahu and obtain their books from the Central Library at Honolulu or from one of the 61 branches and community centres. The islands of Hilo, Maui, Molokai, Lanai and Kauai have a scattered and smaller population. They are provided for by a rural scheme similar to that of the British county libraries. The administration is, however, centred at the Central Library in Honolulu.

The Central Library is an attractive building surrounded by a cloistered way, where borrowers may read in cool seclusion. There are no petty restrictions; borrowers have complete freedom to use the library as they wish. There are no printed requests for silence, and yet an air of religious calm pervades the whole building.

The administration of the libraries, not unnaturally, shows the influence of American practice. The majority of the professional staff were trained in America, and before the war exchanges of staff with American libraries were frequent. The "appointments" column of the professional periodicals holds little attraction for the staff, however, as each assistant to whom I spoke expressed satisfaction with their work and hoped they would never leave the islands. Perhaps this is the "magic of the islands," perhaps it is due to the contentment that one derives from working in such

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a library, but it was stimulating to encounter such enthusiasm. There is the same division into professional and clerical staff as in the American libraries, but there is no rigid barrier to prevent a member of the clerical staff from taking the necessary examinations and joining the professional staff. Art, philosophy, religion and education are separate departments away from the main lending library. The Music Library is also a separate unit with a wider range than most British and some American libraries. Recordings of orchestral and other works may be played in rooms fitted with gramophones, musical scores can be played in music rooms while assistance is given to borrowers to find an outlet for their talent by securing invitations to join choirs and orchestras and in forming music circles. I need not stress what a great boon this is to Service men stationed in the islands.

The Children's rooms equal the other departments in efficiency and scope. With story hours, stamp clubs, library lessons, visits to schools for book talks and displays, library and book week celebrations, the department is taking a full part in the education of the children of Hawaii. The attractive decoration of the Children's rooms leaves little to be desired. Murals illustrating the legends of ancient Hawaii are painted in oil on rough sand-coloured plaster walls.

In all departments the classification system in force is Dewey, with necessary amendments and expansion to accommodate special collections such as the very fine local library. Cataloguing is, of course, carried out with the Library of Congress co-operative cataloguing scheme. The Central Library has a stock of 170,000 volumes, a staff of 68 and the issues during 1940-1941 were 950,828 volumes. The last figure is limited to books lent for home reading.

The Reference Library has a reputation of infallibility in Hawaii. In addition to a fine stock of reference books, it has a pamphlet collection of 20,000 items, an indexed permanent file of several hundred newspapers and periodicals, an illustration collection of 25,000 and an extensive map collection. When the war brought a demand for information on air-raid protection and civil defence, many Red Cross and Army officials turned to the Reference Library for assistance.

The bombs that fell on Honolulu on the morning of 7th December did not damage the library, but a host of difficulties followed in train. Conservation of shipping space made it impossible to obtain an adequate supply of new books. The curfew limited hours of opening and yet increased the demand for books. Workers in the Pacific citadel brought a demand for technical books far in excess of the resources of the library. Library of Congress cards were often delayed and sometimes lost.

To maintain an efficient service retrenchments had to be made and certain distributing stations were closed, while others had their hours curtailed. The number of books allowed per borrower was reduced from 10 to 6. Since then the appropriation granted the library by the Legislature has been increased. The staff are enthusiastic of accomplishing "long hoped-for objectives."

Miss Margaret Newman, the Librarian, and her staff took a great deal of trouble to show me their library. If this inadequate account gives British librarians some idea of excellent work being accomplished in Hawaii, it will to some extent mitigate my debt to their kindness and hospitality.

## The Library Assistant

### Current Books

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. Division of cataloguing and classification *Catalogers' and classifiers' year book* No. 11. Chicago A.L.A., 1945 (Woolston Book Co.). \$2.

This is the first "Year book" issued since 1941, taking the place of the proposed *Quarterly Journal* of which the publication is now postponed. Inevitably, the final edition of the new A.L.A. Code receives much attention. Julia Pettee's "The new code, a consideration of the basic principles of our author-catalogue," is followed by a paper by Grace P. Fuller on corporate entries. Library of Congress cataloguing, college library and university library cataloguing are the subjects of the rest of the articles.

The "Year book" will be of great interest to cataloguers, and of especial value to students in its emphasis on the new A.L.A. Code.

BLICKENS DERFER, JOSEPH P. (Ed.). *The United States quarterly booklist*, Vol. 1, No. 1. March, 1945. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office. \$1.75 per volume (41 issues).

Here is a publication that will be of the greatest use to the librarian who wishes to acquire the best of American publications. The list of the advisory committee is an imposing one, and the object of this official publication is to introduce American books abroad, listing and reviewing current literary learned and scientific works published originally in the United States. Certain works are "more or less automatically excluded. These are light fiction, juveniles, art and craft books and manuals, textbooks, translations, reprints and periodicals as distinguished from serials." Individual works of outstanding merit in these classes may, however, be considered. The Library of Congress assumes full responsibility for all the material printed which includes a main entry, a descriptive annotation and, where possible, a biographical sketch of the author. This first issue contains a selection of the books published from October-December, 1944. It goes without saying that a publication of this nature will receive the heartiest support from British librarians. The selection is catholic, the annotations give a good idea of the contents of each book. It is interesting to note that only one of the books listed—Niebuhr, *Children of light and children of the darkness*—has subsequently been published in England.

MADGE, CHARLES (Ed.). *Pilot guide to the general election*. Pilot Press. 4s.

There has been a mass of propaganda published about the General Election, most of it ephemeral. But this guide to the state of the parties has a value that will last beyond polling day. The editor describes the rules of voting and the issues before the elector—foreign policy, questions of reconstruction and ownership and control. The book is, as far as possible, unbiased.

ROY, CLAUDE. *Eight days that freed Paris*. Pilot Press. 6s.

This vivid and exciting day-to-day diary of the events that led to the liberation of Paris is a fine piece of reportage. The author, a member of the F.F.I., was attached to General Leclerc's armoured column when it entered the city, and he describes the rapid march of events with an eye for the isolated and significant incident, and a vivid sense of humour. A brief sketch of the F.F.I. organisation winds up an able little book.

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VOIGT, MELVIN J. *Subject headings in physics.* Chicago A.L.A., 1944 (Woolston Book Co.). \$3.25.

This planographed book of 151 pages will be of great value to the larger library using a dictionary catalogue. "The assignment of subject headings in the field of physics is not an easy task," says the author : and it is the exception among cataloguers who has the necessary qualifications for the job. Especially valuable are the definitions given with each heading, and the complete list of references and cross references.

We regret that through an error Joseph Kessel's book, *Army of shadows*, was given the wrong title in a review in the March-April issue.

## Correspondence

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Public Library,  
Gravesend.  
27th June, 1945.

Sir,—

Apparently after some tribulation, a Special General Meeting was held at Chaucer House to consider the policy of the Library Association and its Council. It was a Gilbertian affair ; and it produced some startling statements. It was a mistake from the Council's point of view to throw legal opinion at the members. But I cannot help expressing some amusement at the statement made, that the Council was supreme, and that neither a Special General Meeting, nor an Annual General Meeting could "instruct the Council" ; the Council being able to sail on in their own sweet way indifferent to the wishes of the members. It was a mistake, because in all probability this influenced the voting which, in every case, defeated the Council. When these Bye-laws were introduced a number of years ago I pointed out that some deadlock, such as this, would happen one day, in view of the powers conferred on the Council and those that they had taken to themselves. A lot depends upon the interpretation of the Bye-laws. In spite of the opinion that the meeting could not be held, Legal Advice climbed down and itself altered the Resolution. Actually there is no reason why the original purpose for which the Meeting had been called should not have been accepted ; if it were unacceptable it should have been altered to make it at least intelligible to the members.

In view of all this, however, it is obvious that the first step to be taken is to make the general policy of the Council subjective to the Annual General Meeting, and to a Special General Meeting. There is no reason why this should interfere with "keeping a register."

Another surprising statement was made from the platform by a member of the Council to the effect that if the meeting had been held in the Midlands or the North, the result would have been different. It must be a strange Association if a policy of outstanding importance can be determined by the location of the meeting at which the policy is considered. It is a strange organisation for an Association. There is no doubt about it. The Legal Adviser's analogy that if the members did not like the Council and its work, they could turn them out, as a Member of Parliament can be turned out, is not a true analogy, because a Member of Parliament is elected by the electors of a constituency ; if he knows his business he holds, and attends, regular meetings of his constituents ; and his opponents and his supporters can endeavour to get any

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information they may require. The Council of the Library Association, however, is not elected in this way. It might be a good thing if it were. It would be easy for London and the South to meet its representatives, and for the Midlands and the North to do the same thing. At present it really means that a large library system where the Chief is liked, or feared, can count numerous votes. There are several of these systems where the voting power runs well into the hundreds.

It probably came as a surprise, if not as a shock to most of the 400-odd members present, to learn that the Council had done "something" with the precious "Proposals," although it proved impossible to ascertain just what they had done. I confess that in view of the changes that have taken place in local government and its future policy, I was under the impression that the "Proposals" were dead, if not buried. In addition to this threatening danger of the interference with the free expression of free thought, there is a great deal to be said against the "Proposals." That this was realised was shown by the large majority voting for the resolution that the Council should do nothing further until the whole matter could be adequately discussed at an Annual General Meeting, which, by the way, is anticipated for the end of the year.

Most of the discussion, which was on the syllabus, missed several of the points which, I think, are of the first importance. No two people appeared able to agree as to where and why the new syllabus was better or worse than the old. In my mind there is no doubt it is worse. It is definitely easier to become a "chartered librarian" than it used to be to get the then qualification equal in the eyes of the Library Authorities of the country. A chartered librarian—it is quite likely he will be nicknamed a "charity librarian"—will be accepted by niggardly authorities who will, quite justly, say that he is vouched for by the Library Association. It would have been less open to objection if he had been described as a "registered librarian." With regard to the lowering of the standard, there can be little doubt that it will never be raised above that of the elementary school teacher while his education is paid for. So far as I know, beyond these teachers and librarians, no other departmental chief of a local authority has had his fees paid, and his salary paid, while he was studying.

There is no question of the ex-servicemen in this. Everyone agrees that everything possible should be done to make up to the men and women in the Forces what they have lost during the years of the War. There is no room here to deal at greater length with these topics, or at any length with the other topics that were discussed. But as it was stated that "the Press was not present," I feel that, as a Fellow of the Library Association, those who were not present should have some idea, at least, of what was done in their name and on their behalf.

Yours faithfully, ALEX. J. PHILIP,  
Borough Librarian.

L.A.C. Proctor,  
E.R.S., R.A.F.,  
S.E.A.A.F.

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Sir,—

Having read several articles on service libraries in England, here is an account of such a library in India.

The E.R.S. library was begun by two enthusiasts soon after the station's inception. By various means, a collection of miscellaneous books was formed, about thirty in number, and housed in the corner of a billet in a low two-shelf cupboard, three feet

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high. As the books had to be pulled out of the cupboard to discover their identity, a three-shelf rack was obtained and placed on top of the cupboard.

Later more salubrious quarters were found, measuring 19 by 25 feet, and having a lock-up entrance. These were furnished with book-stacks of a more orthodox design, having five shelves each, the lowest one being set at an angle.

Today, the library contains four large bookcases, holding 300 books each, one small bookcase holding 100 books, and the original bookcase mounted on the cupboard. There is also a form, and a desk with card trays introduced below the surface, making for quicker reference of book cards. The desk contains drawers for stationery, filing purposes, etc., and completes the library's furniture.

From the nucleus of thirty books, the stock has grown to about 2,000 volumes, including 500 "field library" books. These "field libraries" consist of 500 to 600 books, which are distributed to stations all over India and changed periodically. Other sources are, books sent out from England as a result of the various book drives (one so obtained being a signed copy of Philip Guedalla's *Hundred days!*), gifts from personnel on the camp and purchases from service funds. The latter is a most unsatisfactory method of obtaining books, as there is a 50 per cent. increase on the price of all English publications. As the municipal library at home has had to buy non-fiction books of the 1910 vintage, the book position seems to be slightly better than in England.

The stock is segregated into three divisions. Firstly 1,300 cloth-bound fiction arranged by author. Secondly, 200 cloth-bound non-fiction classified by Dewey to the third summary. Thirdly, Penguin type books (bound locally with cloth spine and paper-covered boards, at a cost of 5d. each) arranged under the four broad headings of Fiction (General), Thrillers and murders, Westerns, and Non-fiction.

Cataloguing is in the embryo stage, as spare time is a limiting factor, most entries being limited to author, title, class and book number.

The method of issue is quite simple. Each book is numbered inside the front cover, field library book numbers being prefixed by "F.L." The book cards, with author, title, class and book number and spaces for the date stamp are retained in the library, for no cards, labels, etc., are allowed to be affixed to the books themselves. Each borrower has a printed pocket type ticket bearing his name, etc. This, plus the book card, constitutes a charge and is filed by book number.

With the co-operation of the Postal Section, defaulting members are advised by means of a printed form couched in the usual terms that their book is overdue.

The times of opening are one hour each evening, except Sunday, the morning of which day is used for completion of the routine work.

Advertising is done by slides at the camp cinema and posters at the various off-duty centres.

Shelf guides are of necessity very elementary, consisting of hand-written labels pasted on to the shelves. An arrow, two feet in length, points to the author catalogue and enquires if the reader has a favourite author, if so, there may be some of his or her works in the library.

For myself, the spare time expended at this library is excellent experience, but for my co-workers it is hours of precious time given to their fellow airmen.

Yours faithfully, W. H. PROCTOR.